

that we do not replace an old division in Europe with a new one. And this is also critically important. The decision the NATO allies will make in Madrid must not be a one-time decision.

Today let me again say I thank the American Legion for its support. As the largest American veterans organization, many of your members fought to liberate Europe or to defend freedom there during the cold war. And you know that this makes it less likely that future generations will be called to fight and die in Europe.

I thank the Reserve Office Association. Your endorsement speaks clearly to the American people because it is you who could be called out of your civilian lives to make good on our commitments. And you have recognized that enlargement will make us safer and stronger.

There are those who say the Central European nations who will be invited to join NATO are not ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with us. But with all respect, they are wrong. The nations we are considering for membership share our values and our aspirations. They have shown that time and again. They also have the capacity to do what is required of NATO members.

As you have heard today, in 1944, in the weeks after D-Day, American and allied troops in Normandy sought to encircle 20 of Hitler's finest divisions, and some of the fiercest fighting of the war resulted. Our forces raced to seal the final gap between them and to prevent the enemy from escaping into the French countryside. Two units got the job done: one an American infantry division, the other a Polish armored division, survivors of the invasion of their land who joined forces with the allies.

That gap was closed when the Poles finally linked up with the U.S. 90th Infantry at Chambois. The first American they encountered was the man who introduced me today, Captain Laughlin Waters. Now, once the pocket was shut there was another furious battle as the Panzers tried to break out. The Polish First Armored Division held a critical hilltop against a wave of counterattacks. When the Poles ran out of antitank rounds, they moved forward and repelled the enemy with only their rifles and their courage. After

the battle of Falaise Gap, 325 Polish soldiers were buried near where they fell. By these graves in the heart of Western Europe, allied soldiers raised a simple sign of tribute which said in English, "A Polish battlefield."

Judge Waters, your presence here today, 53 years later, reminds us of the character of those we are about to add to NATO, of the values and interests I talked about before. They remind us of our own freedom, democracy, and security. They, too, have fought and died for freedom and democracy, for ours as well as their own. They have fought and died for the freedom and democracy we celebrate tomorrow. Our ties, therefore, have been forged in blood. And just as they were strong allies in World War II, they will be again.

So, Judge Waters, just as you and your men closed the Falaise Gap at Chambois, we must now close another gap, the gap of hope that has divided Europe since the end of World War II. We must give Europe a chance to live free and undivided for the first time ever. That is what we will do next week and in the months and years ahead, as we continue to work with Europe's democracies, strengthen NATO, and adapt it to the missions of the 21st century.

Your presence here today has made our success much more likely, and therefore, you will have something else to celebrate tomorrow on our Independence Day.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:29 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph J. Frank, national commander, the American Legion; Herb Harmon, president, Reserve Officers Association of the United States; and Laughlin Edward Waters, Senior Judge, U.S. District Court for the Central District of California.

Statement on the Resignation of Ambassador Molly Raiser as Chief of Protocol

July 3, 1997

It is with great sadness that I accepted today Ambassador Molly Raiser's resignation as Chief of Protocol, effective July 24. But it is with even greater thanks and pride that

I look back upon her years of service and the extraordinary job she has done to ensure effective American engagement in the world.

No one knows better than Ambassador Raiser the amount of planning and the attention to detail that goes into our Nation's foreign policy. And no one has done more to make the conduct of that policy professional, precise, and smooth. From the war-torn streets of Sarajevo to Denver's gleaming city center, Ambassador Raiser brought elegance and energy to the business of foreign affairs and set a standard for all who worked with her. She made foreign guests feel welcome when they visited the United States and helped me feel at home whenever I traveled abroad. She represented me and the interests of our Nation with insight, judgment, and grace.

I extend Ambassador Raiser my warmest thanks for a job well done, and wish her every possible success in all her future endeavors.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 28

The President announced his intention to appoint Norman J. Ornstein and Leslie Moonves as Cochairs of the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters.

June 29

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to the White House from a weekend stay at Camp David, MD.

June 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Boston, MA. He traveled to New York City in the afternoon, and returned to Washington, DC, after midnight.

The President announced the nomination of Wendy Ruth Sherman to be Counselor

of the Department of State with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his nomination of Maura Harty to be Ambassador to Paraguay.

The President announced his nomination of Curtis Warren Kamman to be Ambassador to Colombia.

The President announced his nomination of Anne Marie Sigmund to be Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic.

The President announced his nomination of Daniel V. Speckhard to be Ambassador to Belarus.

July 1

The White House announced that the President promoted J. Terry Edmonds to the position of Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Speechwriting.

The White House announced that the President promoted Stephanie S. Streett to the position of Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Scheduling.

The White House announced that the President promoted Michael Waldman to be Assistant to the President and Director of Speechwriting.

The White House announced that the President appointed Paul Begala as Assistant to the President and Counselor to the President, a role he will assume in August.

The White House announced that the President named Sidney Blumenthal as Assistant to the President as part of the communications team, which he will join in August.

The White House announced that the President will meet with President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia at the White House on July 18.

The White House announced that the President will meet with President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan at the White House on August 1.

July 2

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Baltimore, MD, where he met with Baltimore Orioles and Philadelphia Phillies players at Oriole Park at Camden Yards before attending the game. Following the game, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President and Hillary Clinton will depart for